

# **SQE: Approach to assessing skills**

Autumn 2019

# What is the SQE?



- A single, national licensing examination for admission as a solicitor of England and Wales – Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE)
- We will no longer specify routes to admission as a solicitor

## **SQE1**

### **Functioning Legal Knowledge Assessments**

- Substantive and procedural law: includes all QLD/CPE foundation subjects and LPC core subjects
- Test of application of fundamental legal principles
- Computer-based assessment

### **Practical Legal Skills Assessment**

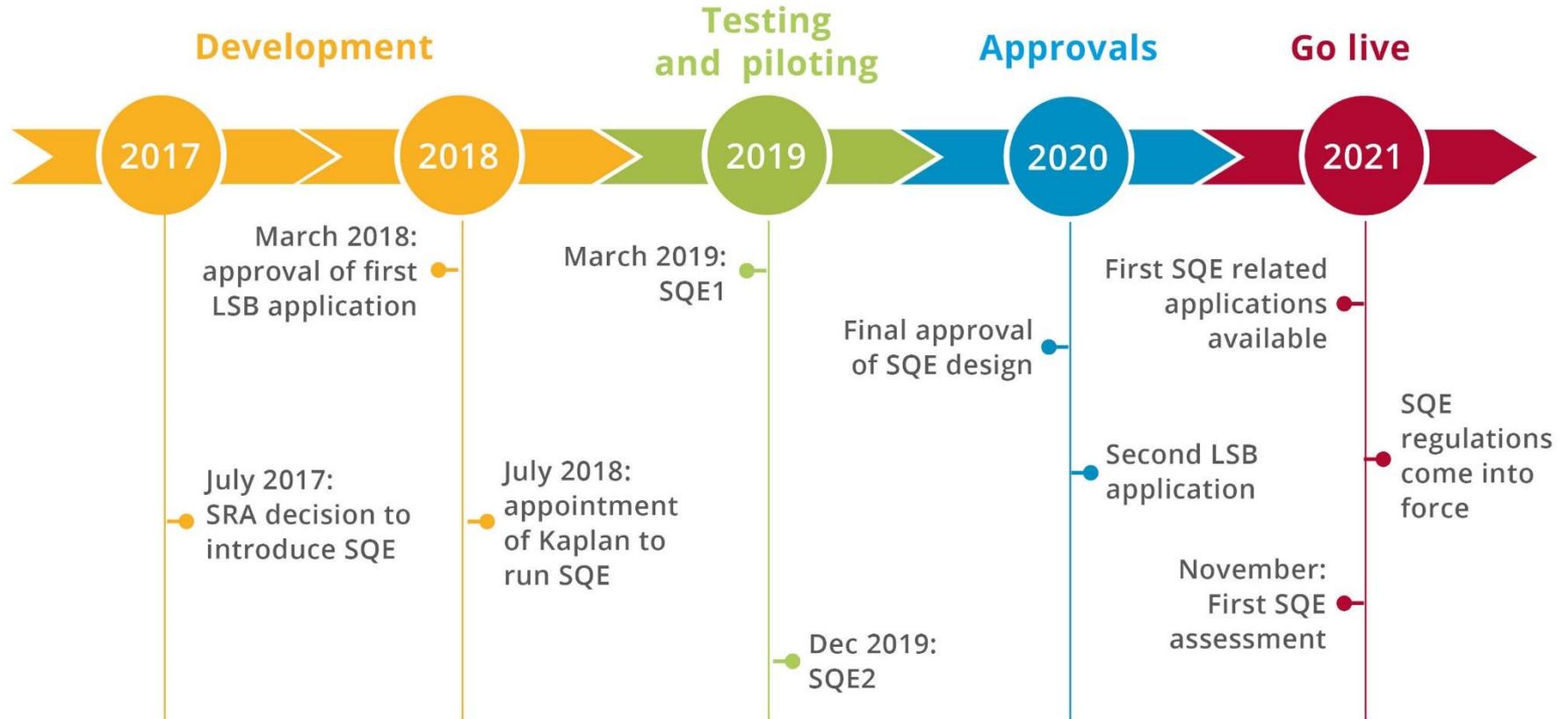
- Legal Research and Writing Skills

## SQE2

### Practical Legal Skills Assessments

- Client interviewing, advocacy, case and matter analysis, legal research and written advice, legal drafting
- Criminal Practice, Dispute Resolution, Property, Wills and the Administration of Estates, Business Practice
- Simulated role plays/written tasks
- Piloting common core and specialisation

# SQE key dates



# SQE1 pilot – March 2019

- 318 candidates participated, in 46 centres in England, Wales, Scotland and internationally
- Tested Functioning Legal Knowledge (FLK) and SQE 1 skills

# SQE1 pilot – March 2019

- Findings
  - It was a useful and valid exercise that achieved our aims
  - It showed it is possible to design a FLK assessment that is robust and manageable
  - The operational aspects of the pilot went well
- Two recommendations for change
  - Reduce FLK from three to two assessments; same coverage and number of questions
  - SQE1 skills model not effective and should not be used in live setting

# Possible options

**Option 1:** Suite of 12 – 16 skills tests

**Option 2:** Case analysis to be included in each FLK exam, linked to the relevant law and to the Solicitors' Competence Statement

# Possible options

**Option 3:** An optional test of writing skills at threshold standard which does not form part of the SQE, but which employers can use as part of their recruitment process

**Option 4:** No SQE1 skills. Assess legal skills in SQE2

**Option 5:** As 4, plus remove requirement to pass SQE1 before attempting SQE2

# Exercise

Analysis of these five options, considering:

- Advantages
- Disadvantages
- Mitigations

# SQE2: inclusion of common core

Pilot is exploring optionality and comparability: principle of fairness

- To what extent might a common core affect the qualifying work experience (QWE) you offer?
- Would it affect your decision to offer QWE or training places?
- Would you need to supplement QWE with training for SQE2?

# SQE2: inclusion of common core

## Continued...

- Would the nature of materials provided to candidates for SQE2 affect your views?
- Would it affect timing? Would it affect when you recruited? Would it mean you asked for completion of both SQE1 and SQE2 before recruiting/QWE?
- Do your answers depend on whether there is only a common core, or whether there is a common core plus assessment in a specialist area chosen by the individual?

Any questions?